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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600

1 MARCH 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
1 March 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Political Activity in South Vietnam

1. A Buddhist "peace offensive," calling for an end to foreign intervention in both North and South Vietnam and an early cease-fire may be in the making. In recent days Tri Quang, Tam Chau, and other Buddhist leaders have issued statements varying in detail but generally containing the same "peace" theme. Pamphlets to this effect also have been circulated, and yesterday another Buddhist peace rally was held in Saigon.

2. Such a Buddhist campaign could gain rapid momentum among the war-weary population and work to undercut South Vietnam's effort against the Viet Cong. This sort of movement is highly vulnerable to exploitation by the Communists, and the manifestations to date probably already reflect their hand to some extent.

Viet Cong Military Activity

3. Viet Cong military activity remained relatively light over the weekend, with no large scale actions reported. Yesterday there was a brief fire-fight between a government patrol and a Viet Cong band discovered on the perimeter of Camp Holloway at Pleiku, scene of the Viet Cong sneak attack on 7 February. In this latest incident the intruders were routed and there were no government casualties.

4. No further information is yet available concerning the suspected Communist supply vessel sunk off Kien Hoa Province Saturday except that it appears to be a typical river vessel without sea-going capability.

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5. The 28 February B-57 strike against Viet Cong concentrations in Phuoc Tuy Province inadvertently resulted in the dropping of a bomb near an ARVN command post. At least four persons were killed and 12 were wounded. The error apparently was the result of poor liaison between ground controllers and the attacking aircraft.

Indochinese Peoples' Conference in Cambodia

6. The plenary meeting of the Indochinese Peoples' Conference (IPC), originally scheduled to begin in Phnom Penh on 25 February but postponed because of differences between the Cambodians and their Communist guests, opened today. In a pre-published address to the opening session, Prince Sihanouk again called for a Geneva-type conference to "really neutralize" Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam. Noting that it is indispensable to offer "solid guarantees" in order to calm Western fears that it will be duped at a conference, Sihanouk suggested that adequate and impartial international control could be administered by an expanded and strengthened International Control Commission. Sihanouk went on to warn the Communist-dominated IPC that Cambodia will refuse to associate itself with any IPC resolution calling for the withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam without a plan to insure the independence and neutrality of Laos and South Vietnam. Sihanouk made a strong plea for unity of the Indochinese states, and proposed a permanent IPC secretariat, looking toward the eventual goal of a League of Indochinese States.

Communist Political Developments

7. Moscow has not issued a full scale comment on the US white paper. Soviet Premier Kosygin at

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the Leipzig Trade Fair yesterday was quoted as saying that he had not read the paper, but called it a "black book" and added that all people in Asia would "unite against what the Americans are doing in Vietnam." The Soviet news agency TASS said that the report is intended "to whitewash the US military intervention in South Vietnam."

8. Hanoi has made no reply to the white paper. The North Vietnamese foreign ministry, however, in a statement yesterday responding to Secretary McNamara's remarks of 25 February on the use of aircraft and armed forces in Vietnam, accused the US of planning "a gradual expansion of the aggressive war" in the area.

Communist Military Developments

9. No Chinese Communist or North Vietnamese military deployments connected with the Vietnam situation have been detected in the last 24 hours.

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10. Activity of Soviet ships engaged in the North Vietnamese trade continues to appear normal. Two Soviet merchant ships have arrived in North Vietnamese ports during the past several days, but both ships departed Soviet ports prior to Premier Kosygin's visit to Hanoi and both apparently carried normal commercial cargos.

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